United Nations ECE/CES/2018/14/Add.12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 May 2018

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians
Sixty-sixth plenary session
Geneva, 18-20 June 2018
Item 11 (a) of the provisional agenda
Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2017

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment

Summary

The document presents the key outcomes of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment which took place from 4-6 October 2017. It was organized following a decision of the Conference of European Statisticians and the recommendation of the UNECE Steering Group on measuring quality of employment.

The report is submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

GE.18-07751(E)

1807751

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment (MQE) meeting was held in Geneva on 4–6 October 2017. The meeting was organized by the UNECE Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Poland, Russian Federation and Switzerland. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following specialized agencies and international organizations: Eurostat, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

3. The meeting was chaired by Silvia Perrenoud of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. Jason Gilmore, Statistics Canada; Hanna Sutela, Statistics Finland; Federica Pintaldi, the National Institute for Statistics of Italy (Istat); Monica Castillo, ILO; Françoise Carré and Joann Vanek, WIEGO, acted as session chairs.

4. All background documents and presentations of the meeting are available at http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43848.

II. Organization of the meeting

3. The following topics were discussed at the meeting on the basis of the provided papers and presentations:

(a) Progress of the Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment;

(b) Impact of the 19th ICLS resolution;

(c) Experiences with quality of employment indicators;

(d) New forms of work and their measurement;

(e) Future work agenda topics;

(f) Experiences from countries

(g) Challenges in measuring quality of employment;

(h) Frameworks related to quality of employment;

(i) Qualifications and skills.

III. Summary of discussions and main conclusions reached at the meeting

A. Session 1: Progress of the Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment

5. The session was dedicated to a presentation of the work of the Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment and a presentation of the outcome of an online survey on the use of the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework* (UNECE 2015).

6. The Chair of the Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment, Silvia Perrenoud, presented the main outputs of the Steering Group work between 2016 and 2018. The Steering Group has focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook, on the identification of priority issues of the research agenda where more work is required and on the organisation of this expert group meeting. The Chair highlighted the planned next steps and encouraged participants to share their ideas and suggestions.

7. One of the objectives of the Steering Group is to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook. To this end an online survey on the implementation and usefulness of the Handbook was carried out in 2017. UNECE presented the results of the survey. While there were only few answers from countries, the survey provided useful information about the use of the Handbook, the relevance of the indicators and the availability of data sources in different countries, and areas where the Handbook could be improved. The Steering Group will continue collecting feedback from countries on the implementation and usefulness of the Handbook.

B. Session 2: Impact of the 19th ICLS resolution

Session chair: Françoise Carré, WIEGO network

8. David Hunter, ILO, provided an overview of the main issues raised during deliberations on the revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-03). The ILO Expert Group is reviewing the classification to develop two hierarchies for classification: one based on autonomy (dependent vs. independent work) and the other based on economic risk (work for pay or for profit) to be complemented by a list of essential as well as required and recommended cross-cutting variables. Furthermore, an additional high level category of Dependent Contractors is being proposed at the same level as Employee and Self-employed. Also sub-categories of Employees are being designed.

9. Monica Castillo, ILO, reviewed the main outlines of the 19th ICLS resolution on work activities and employment. She highlighted the definition of "work activities" and the boundaries of employment within it and their relationship to the SNA boundary. The definition of work activities covers volunteer and other non-remunerated work activities and may have repercussions for some of the indicators within the Quality of Employment framework. Some quality of employment indicators may be reported for all work activities, beyond employment, while others are not relevant, for example those on work-life balance based on characteristics of the main paid job. Also, the new definition of work and employment creates difficulty for implementation of the existing indicator for Child Labor (sub dimension 1 B) because it defines employment only for those over age 15. Also, because the new definition of employment excludes own-use production of goods from employment, a difficulty arises with the indicator on Informal Employment, which is based on the 17th ICLS definition of employment.

10. Monica Castillo presented the ILO Steering Group recommendation to maintain both sub dimension 1B and continue to base the Informal Employment indicator on the 17th ICLS Resolution on employment in order to continue to be relevant across developed and developing economies. The Steering Group also proposed to issue a guidance document to complement the existing Handbook and provide information on potential impacts of the 19th ICLS definition, review which indicators may apply to work activities and provide limited guidance on selected indicators, and give detailed attention to the two indicators listed above.

11. Monica Castillo reported on pilot tests underway in 10 countries to measure the difference between paid and non-remunerated work. She also identified a resource, the ILO manual on non-remunerated work. Non-remunerated work needs to be reported in a

continuous manner only in countries where it is common. In other countries, modules may be sufficient.

12. It was noted that measuring unpaid work may be difficult. Using of alternative sources, e.g. national Time Use Surveys, can provide useful information.

13. There was general agreement on the proposal to keep the Handbook as it is and to complement it with a separate guidance on how to adapt to the definitions of the 19th ICLS resolution.

C. Session 3: Experiences with quality of employment indicators

Session chair: Hanna Sutela, Statistics Finland

14. There were three presentations in session 3, which demonstrated different practical implementations of quality of employment indicators: in Israel some indicators were included as a part of Well-being indicators published by the Statistical Bureau; Austria had tested the feasibility and relevance of selected quality of employment indicators on the basis of their LFS data; and members of the Steering Group had compiled a joint article comparing quality of employment by selected indicators in five different countries.

15. The following points emerged from the discussion:

- Mark Feldeman from the Central Bureau of Statistics presented the Israeli example of involving academics, policy makers and the public in defining the need and form of building a set of quality of well-being/employment indicators was a welcomed approach; so was the principle of collecting statistical information on these topics to support better policy making;
- The Austrian endeavor showed that the selected indicators were comprehensible as defined in the Handbook. Judith Foster (Statistics Austria) explained how the indicators were technically feasible and could with few exceptions, be built on the basis of the LFS. Almost all indicators turned out to be relevant in the Austrian context;
- Silvia Perrenoud, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, presented the joint article comparing selected indicators of quality of employment among five countries, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy and Switzerland. The analysis proved the general feasibility of indicators for international comparison - despite the fact that some of the indicators could be considered as more comparable than the others;
- Quality of employment is a multidimensional phenomenon, and the selection of indicators for analysis may play a significant role in describing the state of play of quality of employment in a given country;
- There is a great interest of different stakeholders and users towards country rankings. However, depending on the selection of indicators, the relative ranking of the countries may vary. Overall, caution is needed when making country comparisons. Sufficient contextual information and additional explanation for the correct interpretation and use of the statistics should be made available to users;
- The examples presented in the session were found encouraging and there was a wish that more countries would start to compile and publish information on quality of employment using the Handbook and drawing on the support of the Steering Group.

D. Session 4: New forms of work and their measurement

Session Chair: Joann Vanek, WIEGO network

16. The session was based on the following presentations:

- Michael Horrigan (BLS, USA) described the new Contingent Work Survey, which is being undertaken in 2017. The survey builds on the 2005 Contingent Work and Alternative Work Arrangements Survey and the 2016 research of Katz and Kruger which showed significant increases in alternative work arrangements, independent contractors, on call, temporary agency work and workers provided by contract companies from 2005 to 2015. This 2017 survey includes few new questions focused on whether workers have accessed employment through an internet platform. Work provided by contract refers to longer-term relations with a company they are working with and accounts for the largest increase over the period;

- Hanna Sutela, Statistics Finland, presented the challenges of measuring the digitalized work life in surveys. Digitalization refers to how a device may be affecting one's private life rather than simply to the use of a device. It is a complex process. It affects different stages in the work process so it is not clear where to focus questions. As digital systems are operated from remote locations, the measurement of the effects of digitalization is difficult. The effects of digitalization include a blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure, tighter control on work performance, and changes in social relations (in work communities, at home and in the use of time). These changes lead to greater stress for workers and have consequences for quality of employment. It was noted that it is difficult to operationalize all dimensions of digital work in a survey questionnaire.

E. Session 5: Future work agenda topics

Session Chair: Monica Castillo, ILO

17. Fabrice Murtin, OECD, discussed challenges in measuring discrimination at work, based on the 2017 OECD Guidelines on Measuring Quality of the Working Environment. The measurement of specific aspects of the topic such as type, cause, perpetrator, consequences and degrees of discrimination at work was highlighted. He suggested that guidelines may be needed to support wording of questions and noted that subjective questions seem to perform well in surveys. Regarding the intensity of discrimination at work, a detailed scale set of response categories works best as opposed to a simple yes/no question. He presented information on a comparative review of various surveys on discrimination at work, including the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) ad hoc modules, Eurobarometer Flash Module 398, and national surveys. Based on the review, he suggested that the consequences in terms of negative effects of discrimination at work are best measured with a scale set of responses; around 10 questions are needed in the questionnaire to support identification of the types of discrimination, causes, and consequences. It is recommended to seek information about the age, sex and ethnicity of the respondents reporting discrimination at work.

18. Hanna Sutela, Statistics Finland, presented research regarding measuring discrimination at work in Finland. A key challenge in measuring discrimination at work relates to the subjectivity of questions and how these are interpreted across countries. In some countries, the threshold for reporting may be higher when discrimination at work is more prevalent. The issue of the difficulty of obtaining information on discrimination in the

recruitment process was mentioned. Moreover, the issue of underrepresentation of certain groups in the survey sample who may be prone to discrimination at work is a concern. The results of the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey (FQWLS) in 2013 were presented, specifically as regards measurement of discrimination at work, and lessons learnt. In Finland, favouritism was reported quite high as a cause of workplace discrimination, and young women reported discrimination more often than other groups. A web survey has recently been conducted to follow up on qualitative interviews of persons identified as having experienced discrimination at work in the FQWLS. The need to measure coping mechanisms for victims of discrimination at work was discussed.

19. Italian experiences in measurement of job satisfaction were given by Federica Pintaldi, Istat. The presentation focussed on new questions in the Italian LFS to better understand the link between quality of employment and job satisfaction. The Quality of Employment and Well-being framework in Italy has 12 dimensions, including dimension 5 on work and life balance. The framework includes 14 selected decent work and quality of employment indicators. The LFS added nine new questions on job satisfaction and job insecurity, which was previously omitted. A key aim was to define and measure the target variables related to job satisfaction. Career advancement, earnings and Job insecurity were key variables to measure job satisfaction. Involuntary part-time workers experienced lower levels of job satisfaction than other groups. Information on job satisfaction can be collected by a (larger) set of questions in an LFS ad hoc module, or by including (fewer) questions in a core LFS questionnaire. An analysis of which indicator to use as a better measure of job satisfaction, either a mean of the estimates of several variables or a single question on job satisfaction, gave comparable results. The issues of measuring job satisfaction among self-employed workers versus paid employees and job satisfaction by job tenure were discussed. It was noted that there is often a honeymoon phase in the early period of a job.

20. Christian Wingerter (Eurostat) presented the review of the indicators on work-life-balance. The current indicators in the framework includes employment rate of mothers and fathers, possibility to work at home, commuting time, care leave entitlement, parental leave and child care use (experimental). Other indicators that have relevance include long working hours, night work, evening work, weekend work and flexible work schedule. The indicator on child care facilities is now dropped, while four others need work, including care for incapacitated relatives, effect of parenthood on the employment rate, work intrusion into leisure time, and self-perceived work-life balance. Labour force participation rates are almost three percentage points higher among women with no regular care responsibilities versus those caring for incapacitated adults. The inclusion of a variable on the effects of older care on current employment and types of effects has not been decided yet. The issue of whether to use the employment rate or the at-work rate for the indicator on employment of mothers and fathers was discussed. An example of female employment rates and work attendance rates in Finland and Sweden (woman aged 15 to 64 years) was discussed. In Finland, parental leave is not counted as employment. In countries that have very long periods of parental leave, the employment rate may give a distorted picture.

21. The Swiss approach to present the indicators was presented by Silvia Perrenoud, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The presentation showed how indicators from the Handbook have been disseminated, including the publication of a booklet in 2011, which was updated in 2015. In the print version, there is a short text covering the last 10 years and a graph for each indicator, using different colours for visualization of different dimensions. In the online summary table of indicators, there are additional breakdowns, metadata and regular updates. Further examples of topic areas that are presented include migration, education, city statistics, sustainable development, and GDP and beyond. The MONET initiative seeks to monitor the sustainable development goal indicators in Switzerland. MONET covers 12 topics, including 73 indicators, each presented with a pictogram. In the Swiss experience in measuring quality of employment, the main effort

comes in the run up to the launch of the first publication of the sets of indicators, but once launched, the updates become easier.

22. Carsten Boldsen, UNECE, informed about the work of the UNECE Task Force on leading composite and sentiment (LCS) indicators established to develop recommendations of good practices for NSOs to produce LCS indicators. Weighting of individual series into a composite indicator is a main challenge, and the selection of indicators, dimensions and weights may be questioned and raise political dispute. Nonetheless, such indicators give NSOs visibility. The issue of the complex task of the NSO communicating LCS indicators was also emphasized. In the Framework of MQE, the question was raised about how we could make a choice of a common set of indicators for all countries when it was supposed to be a toolbox for countries to select from. Conclusions from the discussion suggested that perhaps this is not the most urgent topic but that it can be kept on the list of possible future work of the steering group.

F. Session 6: Experiences from countries

Session chair: Federica Pintaldi, ISTAT

23. The session was based on presentations by the Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), the United States of America and Statistics Canada. The first presentation, "Declining labour force participation rates in the U.S." by Michael W. Horrigan BLS, concerned changing labour market participation linked to demographic trends and cultural changes, in particular, young people's longer involvement in education attainment. These cohorts are interviewed every year or every two years and a complete event history of their labour force participation (employed, unemployed, out of the labour force) is recorded for every week of their lives. The NLSY79 cohort included ages 25-30 between 1983 and 1996, the NLSY97 cohort included ages 25-30 between 2006 and 2016.

24. The second presentation, "Long car commutes" by Jason Gilmore, Statistics Canada, concerned quality of employment variable 3C3 "Commuting Time" within Dimension 3 Working Time and Work-Life Balance. This presentation was based on 2011 data of Census/National Household Survey. The focus of the presentation was long car commutes, defined as people who use at least one hour getting to work in a car each day. The indicator 3C3 has a large impact on measuring work life balance and health. Furthermore, commuting time between work and home can also be stressful, tiring and expensive, according to research.

G. Group work: Challenges in measuring quality of employment

25. The session was based on group discussions about the following issues:

(a) Issues for future work and research:

- Selection of most important issues for future work and research from the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment;
- More research in teleworking and precarious employment;
- Further development of indicators regarding prospects for promotion, including the use of longitudinal indicators of mobility within and across employers.

(b) New topics for the research agenda:

- Suggestion to consider new indicators, e.g.: time not at work; hours at work paid/unpaid; hours of sleep; hours of commuting;

- Further research on the topic of the intrusion of work into the private life, digital employment, care for elderly persons or commuting in the case when persons move for employment.

(c) Experimental indicators:

- There is a need to collect more practical experience on the usefulness of the experimental indicators before making decisions on whether they should be included in the framework.

(d) Ongoing issues of future work:

- There is a need to promote the Handbook and collect more feedback on its usefulness from countries.

(e) International organizations:

- International organizations should continue supporting countries in developing and compiling indicators on quality of employment through e.g. facilitating exchange of experiences and good practices and promotion of the Handbook;
- The possibility to create an international database with quality of employment indicators should be considered. A designated website for exchange of research work and good practices in measuring quality of employment could also be established. It was noted that resources for the establishment and maintenance of a database or a website for research material would need to be provided.

H. Session 7: Frameworks related to quality of employment

Session chair: Jason Gilmore, Statistics Canada

26. There were three presentations by the international organizations in session 7, which described different frameworks related to the quality of employment.

27. First presentation given by Chrisitian Wingerter, Eurostat, talked about Eurobase indicators on quality of employment. Eurostat is offering a public web page to promote the availability of indicators on quality of employment and of the Statistical Framework on Quality of Employment. This page has both data and background information about the framework. All countries are encouraged to use this resource, and to promote its availability to all interested users. Countries are invited to provide feedback and suggestions on its user friendliness, and to provide any data that can fill the data gaps.

28. Second presentation given by Monica Castillo, ILO, on the Comparison on the DWMF and FMQE. The key takeaway for this presentation is that these two frameworks have some differences as well as similarities (in content, in their history and in use, etc.), and they are both important and valuable for user communities.

29. The presentation by Fabrice Murtin on OECD Job Quality Framework focused on earnings quality, labour market security and quality of the work environment. It is a complementary framework to FMQE. The Job Strain Index (4-question version) has great potential for filling data gaps in the JQF and the FMQE, and it should be considered by the FMQE Expert Group.

30. It was concluded that different frameworks that touch on quality of employment should be considered for their complementary aspects and not as duplication. Audiences and users can have different needs, but for all cases of different quality frameworks, it is

important to collaborate and be informed of their content and uses so that all these frameworks can develop and improve.

I. Session 8: Qualifications and skills

31. ILO has been asked to develop a framework for measuring qualifications and skills mismatch. Valentina Stoevska, ILO, presented the work with this framework, Qualification and skill mismatch: Concepts and Measurement. It was stressed that the incidence of qualification mismatch is sensitive to the approach used, and all qualification mismatch measures are likely to overestimate the level of mismatch (voluntary or temporarily). The skill mismatch measurement requires additional variables on skill related job characteristics in the labour force survey.

IV. Proposal for future work

32. The meeting participants agreed that:

(a) Work on the following topics should continue to have priority:

- Discrimination at work;
- Job satisfaction;
- Work/life balance;
- Approaches to present the indicators;
- Review of indicators for dimension 4 Security of employment and social protection.

(b) The review of indicators for (in particular) dimension 4 should await the adoption of the revision of the ICSE.

(c) In addition, work on the following areas should be given priority:

- New forms of employment and their measurement, including precarious employment, the digitalized labour market, teleworking, the GIG economy;
- Care for elderly persons;
- Commuting;
- Intrusion of employment into the private life.

(d) Indicators marked as experimental need further development. Work on these indicators should continue in terms of collecting experiences on their compilation and suitability;

(e) It would be useful to collect more feedback and experiences from countries on producing QE indicators according to the statistical framework;

(f) The Steering Group on MQE should follow-up on the research agenda proposed in the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, taking the priorities and suggested topics of the 2017 Expert Group meeting into account. As part of this, the Steering Group should:

- Develop a proposal on how to take the definitions of the 19th ICLS resolution on Work Statistics into account in the statistical framework;
- Discuss the possibilities of establishing an online database with QE indicators as well as a designated webpage for exchange of research and practical experiences in MQE;
- Discuss ways in which to further promote the statistical framework for MQE, including having more indicators published under the headline of QE.

33. Meeting participants suggested that an expert group meeting on MQE be organized to follow-up on the issues and priorities raised at this meeting.